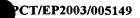
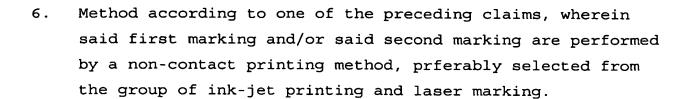


Claims

- 1. Method for marking an item, comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing information to be applied to the item;
 - b) applying a first marking to the item corresponding to the information provided in step a);
 - c) reading said first marking applied in step b) and comparing it with the information provided in step a);
 - d) applying a second marking to the item if the first marking read in step c) does not correspond to the information provided in step a);
 - e) optionally affixing said item to a carrier or a transportation substrate prior to applying the first marking.
- 2. Method according to claim 1 wherein said steps a) to d) are carried out in-line on an integrated equipment under the control of an electronic processor.
- 3. Method according to claim 1, wherein said second marking comprises the overprinting of said item with a cancellation mark.
- 4. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 3, wherein said first and said second markings are applied by a printing process.
- 5. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 4, wherein said first marking, said reading of said first marking, and said second marking are performed in a continuous process.

D04/006163





- 7. Method according to one of the preceding claims, wherein said first marking corresponding to said information is a bar code or a matrix code.
- 8. Method according to one of claims 1 to 7, wherein said first marking is printed using an ink comprising a material-based security element.
- 9. Method according to one of claims 1 to 8, wherein said first marking is printed in covert.
- 10. Method according to claim 6, wherein said first marking is applied by a laser beam to a surface carrying a light- or heat-sensitive coating.
- 11. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 10, wherein said information is encrypted, or carries an encrypted part.
- 12. Method according to one of claims 1 to 11, wherein said information is read by a device selected from the group consisting of a photocell assembly, a multi-photocell-array assembly and a camera coupled to image-processing means.
- 13. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 12, wherein said information is generated on a remote server.

WO 2004/006163

- 14. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 13, wherein said second marking or canceling is applied by a non-contact printing method, particularly by ink-jet printing.
- 15. Method according to claim 14, wherein said ink-jet printing is performed with an ink containing a vividly colored substance.
- 16. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 15, wherein said marking comprises a machine-readable component.
- 17. Method according to one of the claims 1 to 16, wherein the marked item is affixed to an article or good to mark that article or good.
- 18. Device for marking an item comprising:
 - a) a first unit for applying a first marking corresponding to information to an item;
 - b) a reading unit for reading said first marking and the corresponding information on said item;
 - c) an electronic processor unit for comparing said information read in step b) with said information applied in step a);
 - d) a second unit for applying a second marking to said item if said information read in step b) does not correspond to said information applied in step a).
- 19. Device according to claim 18, wherein said first unit, said reading unit, and said second unit are arranged in-line as an integrated equipment and operating under the control of an electronic processor.
- 20. Device according to claim 18 or 19, further comprising a quality control detector unit.